

# Idaho Currents

## Look Out – It's The Energy Hog, And He Must Be Stopped!

"Do *you* have energy hogs in YOUR house? If you have costly energy bills or uncomfortable rooms, and chances are you do, you need to get the energy hogs out."

of their home. "You'll save money, improve the comfort of your home, and help the environment too," says the

That's the message behind a new national awareness campaign sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, The Alliance to Save Energy and The Ad Council. Idaho became a partner earlier this year to help raise awareness of the benefits of residential energy efficiency and conservation by teaching children and their parents the importance of saving energy. Idaho is one of 22 states participating in the campaign.

The campaign featuring a dastardly new character, the Energy Hog, aims to inspire kids to take the message to their parents to reduce current demands on energy and create a future generation of energy-conscious adults.

### **But he can be stopped!**

A series of short commercial television and radio ads will encourage children and their parents to visit the Energy Hog website. Children will find a series of five games they can play while becoming familiar with ways to save energy. Anyone who wins all five games becomes an official "energy hog buster" with an official printed certificate.

Parents can also visit the site, but are "warned" not to enter the Kid's Section – "No Adults Allowed." The parents' section features information on how to improve the energy efficiency



[www.energyhog.org](http://www.energyhog.org)

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website's home page. Subtopics include an energy checklist, energy audit, conservation tips, and a special site for teachers.

### What or who is an Energy Hog?

The Energy Hog is the “spokes-villain” for a national energy awareness campaign. He’s also a character kids can love to hate. As the “bad guy,” his presence in homes causes high energy bills and uncomfortable rooms.

“The Energy Hog puts a face to the concept of wasting energy by taking a topic of low interest and making it fun for children, while empowering them to inspire their parents to make wise energy choices,” says Bob Hoppie, Energy Division administrator.

Through a series of events later this year, the Energy Hog will be introduced to elementary students and the general public. At the same time, the Energy Hog’s nemesis, Hog Buster, will counter with energy efficiency information, hand-held fans, bookmarks, and “tattoos” that exposed the villainous nature of beast.

In addition, with their parents, children can complete and Energy Hog Scavenger Hunt – a mini-energy audit of their own home. Using a target audience of children



ages 8-13, the games and activities teach conservation with normal things in the home, such as lights and appliances.

According to the National Energy Policy, during the next 20 years, U.S. natural gas consumption will increase by more than 50 percent and electricity by 45 percent. This campaign strives to decelerate these trends by raising public awareness about the benefits of saving energy at home.

By practicing simple conservation measures, families can build strong energy habits, reduce energy bills, and help their communities reduce energy-related pollution.

To learn more about the Energy Hog campaign or to participate in the Energy Hog activities, log on to [www.energy.idaho.gov/energy](http://www.energy.idaho.gov/energy) and follow the links. Several different Energy Hogs can be found on the web site along with the “Hog Busters Training Camp.” Each hog loves to waste energy in a different way, and there are different ways to stop each as kids learn to save energy at home.

The campaign promotes the benefits of energy conservation and energy efficiency, including:

- **Saving on utility bills – by reducing monthly energy bills, families save money.**
- **Better environment – by using less energy, we reduce harmful energy-related emissions.**
- **Increased awareness of new technologies – by using low-e windows, compact fluorescent lamps, and Energy Star appliances households consume significantly less energy.**

# Boise Company Breathes New Life Into Home-Made Wind Farm



**The view from a 152-foot wind tower can be pretty spectacular, as shown by Tim Harmon, left, and Todd Haynes, both with G3, LLC, a company that now owns the Lewandowski Wind Farm near Mountain Home. G3 partner Lars Dorr took the photo from another wind tower.**

Three wind turbines off Interstate 84 between Boise and Mountain Home are spinning again after being off-line for nearly a year.

The wind farm, known as the Lewandowski Wind Farm, was recently purchased by G3, LLC, a Boise company owned by Brian Jackson, Lars Dorr, Tim Harmon, Craig Haynes, and Todd Haynes. The group includes three mechanical engineers, an FAA licensed airplane mechanic, and an electrician.

The team repaired wiring and replaced fuses on two turbines. The third turbine needed its yaw control gear reducers repaired, which was done by enXco at no charge. EnXco is a company that develops, builds, operates and manages wind energy projects throughout North America.

“Getting the turbines back online was not easy,” says Todd Haynes. “Lots of time has been spent on the learning curve.”

Haynes says now that the turbines are operating, the group has plans for thorough maintenance and automation. To minimize frequent turbine stoppage and assist in the automation process, the Idaho Energy Division awarded a \$3,000 grant to G3, LLC.

The funds will be used for mapping the turbines’ control circuitry system and determine the best approach for automation. The team also wants to develop a renewable energy research center on the farm in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Energy and Boise State University’s College of Engineering.

The wind farm was originally constructed by Bob Lewandowski beginning in February 2002. The first turbine began generating electric-

ity in late October 2002, followed by the second turbine about 21 months later. The third turbine was turned on last spring.

After seeing his 30-year dream come to fruition, Lewandowski died suddenly in late July 2005. After his death, it was discovered there was not a lot of documentation of how the equipment was assembled, required maintenance procedures, and operating guidelines. After a short time it became increasingly difficult to maintain the turbines, and within a few months they stopped spinning.

The wind farm has three 152-foot towers with turbines capable of generating 324 kilowatts of electricity. Considering variations in wind, the turbines provide an average annual output of about 80 kW – enough energy to supply the electricity needs of 66 average Idaho homes. The power, purchased by Idaho Power Co., feeds into the electric grid and is balanced by the electricity use of nearby neighbors.



# Watch Out For Those 'Great Summer Deals'

By Bob Hoppie, Energy Division Administrator

Spring looks to be here finally. As with every spring, we'll start seeing door-to-door vendors selling dubious products and fixes for all our woes. This year with high costs for virtually all energy sources, we'll probably be seeing more fixes for our energy woes. This year reminds me of a couple of things – how things never change, and cow magnets. Cow magnets? Oh yes, they are back and guaranteed to save you big bucks.



I was first introduced to cow magnets at the Idaho State Fair in 1981. For those of you who don't know, here are the magnets I'm talking about.

The concept was that you buy two cow magnets and a hose clamp, and attach them on either side of your vehicle's fuel line just before it enters your carburetor or other fuel delivery system. The reason is explained as follows:

"The flowing fuel molecules collide with this abrupt magnet field, energizing and dispersing the hydrocarbon molecules in the fuel just before it is burned, enabling more hydrocarbon molecules to combine with oxygen, which yields more complete combustion of the fuel."

The fuel saving claims that came with these back in the 80's was "up to 30 percent more miles per gallon." That is some pretty outstanding results.

Now to cut to the chase about all this, let me say if that works for you and you believe it, then I have a bridge for sale I'd like to talk to you about. Believe me, it did not work then, there are numerous fictitious claims by the promoters, and they are all hot air.

Anyway, cow magnets eventually left the mainstream after a brief season or two; with the only effect re-

ally being that the cow magnet manufacturers got a shot in the arm and the cattle ranchers came up against a brief cow magnet shortage.

Now some 25 years later, they're back. I admit, they are new and improved, and they come in a consumer friendly package and they have a name. If you can read the fine print, this one is patented both in the United States and internationally.

Now they clip onto your fuel line without needing hose clamps as an additional accessory. Now they cost more, the vendors have reduced the savings estimates slightly, and they still don't work.

The point is, we need to use our common sense always, and when things are in turmoil – like rising prices for all our fuels – we should be more alert, since we have more attacks on our common senses to get at our hard-earned dollars. This isn't just about cow magnets, either.



We'll probably see our share of door-to-door sales of cooling products and methods this summer, including reflective paints for our roofs, reflective attic barriers, and super furnace filters. These will be in addition to the usual assault for sealing driveways, cleaning products and miscellaneous other products of dubious value.

Keep you mind on alert for these things. Conduct your own independent research and call the Idaho Energy Hotline, **1-800-334-SAVE**. Always give these products your utmost scrutiny. How does our Better Business Bureau put it – "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!"

# Grants Will Boost Biodiesel Distribution in Idaho

Three Idaho fuel distributors have been awarded grants from the Energy Division to make biodiesel fuel more readily available to consumers.

The Energy Division awarded \$236,200 in federal grant money to the three distributors who will use the funds to invest in infrastructure equipment, such as new tanks and pumps. To qualify for the grant, each distributor had to be willing to invest a minimum of 50 percent cost match.

The distributors are Coleman Oil, \$100,000, and Primeland Biodiesel Stations, \$12,200, both in Lewiston and surrounding areas; and Stinker Stations of Boise that received a grant of \$100,000 and a second grant for \$24,000.

Right now biodiesel is available only in a few locations, mainly in Southern Idaho. However, with the three distributors making the organically produced fuel available from the panhandle region to the Treasure Valley, more than 30 filling stations will begin selling the fuel within a few months.

"There is a huge interest in biodiesel and other renewable fuels both here and throughout the country," says John Crockett, energy specialist and bioenergy manager with the Energy Division. "This provides a great opportunity to create demand that will one day allow us to grow our own fuel here in Idaho."

## Biodiesel plant

Idaho's first biodiesel production plant, Blue Sky Biodiesel, expects to open within a few months. The plant, located near Fruitland, plans to produce 10 million gallons of biodiesel annually.

Biodiesel is made from vegetable oils derived from crops, which provides new markets for Idaho farmers. Because biodiesel is biodegradable, it burns much cleaner and produces significantly less air pollution than traditional diesel.

When biodiesel is blended with diesel to make fuels like B20 (20 percent biodiesel), the blend creates superior lubricity, which reduces wear and tear on engine components and helps the engine last longer, according to Crockett.

Consumer information on the location of filling stations providing biodiesel will be posted on the Energy Division's website at [www.energy.idaho.gov](http://www.energy.idaho.gov). The website will list the addresses of the stations and a notation once the pumps are installed and operating.

## Building A New Home?

With an increasing interest in Energy Star home construction, the Energy Division and Idaho Power Company have jointly produced a 12-minute video for the public.

The video can be downloaded from either agency websites, and is also available in DVD format from the Energy Division at no charge.

The video is hosted by Melinda O'Malley and includes comments from owners of Energy Star homes as well as energy efficiency experts.

A new Energy Star qualified home performs better for the homeowner and the environment because of a variety of energy efficient features:

- ◆ Quiet and comfortable
- ◆ Lower maintenance
- ◆ Reduced utility bills
- ◆ Improved indoor air
- ◆ Tested and certified
- ◆ Environmentally friendly

"Energy Star qualified new homes achieve their energy savings through a variety of reliable and established technologies and building practices," says Ken Eklund, principal energy specialist with the Energy Division. All Energy Star homes meet stringent quality control requirements established by the certifying agency, the Energy Division.

To access the video, log on to the Energy Division's website at [www.energy.idaho.gov](http://www.energy.idaho.gov) and follow the links. Anyone unable to access the video can call the Idaho Energy Hotline, **1-800-334-SAVE**, to request a free DVD.